RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 24th April, 2003/4 Vaisakha, 1925 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*481. [*The Questioner (DR. Alladi P. Rajkumar) was absent. For answer vide* pages 35-36.]

Speed Post Service in Tamil Nadu

*482. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Speed Post service extended in Tamil Nadu so far, district-wise;

(b) the districts in Tamil Nadu where Speed Post service is presently not available; and

(c) the criteria for extending the Speed Post service in a particular place?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) The number of Post Offices with Speed Post facilities in Tamil Nadu Circle, District-wise is given in the Table (*See* below).

(b) Speed Post service is available in all the districts of Tamil Nadu.

(c) Speed Post is a premium product and is run on commercial considerations. Expansion of Speed post network is an on-going process. Extending the service to a particular place will depend on market requirements, customer needs, expected business and connectivity *required for maintaining service standards.*

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of District	No. of Post Offices with Speed Post facility
1.	Ariyalur	1
2.	Chennai	104
3.	Coimbatore	36
4.	Cuddalore	24
5.	Dharmapuri	4
6.	Dindigul	11
7.	Erode	5
8.	Kanchipuram	23
9.	Karur	7
10.	Kanyakumari	2
11.	Madurai	11
12.	Nagapattinam	2
13.	Namakkal	3
14.	Nilgiris	7
15.	Perambalur	1
16.	Pudukottai	3
17.	Ramanathapuram	8
18.	Salem	11
19.	Sivaganga	11
20.	Thanjavur	12
21.	Theni	7
22.	Tiruchirappalli	26
23.	Tirunelveli	9
24.	Tiruvallur	3
25.	Tiruvanamalai	6
26.	Tiruvarur	2
27.	Vellore	35
28.	Villupuram	3
29.	Virudhunagar	7
	TOTAL:	384

PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Sir, from the statement, I understand that the Speed Post centres in Tamil Nadu are not adequate. Only 384 centres are there in 29 districts. Will the Minister consider increasing the number of Speed Post centres in all the districts? Moreover, the rates charged by the Postal Department are high as compared to the rates charged by private courier services. For example, the Postal Department charges Rs. 30 for speed post from Kanyakumari to Chennai, which is a distance of 850 Kms., and a private courier service charges only Rs. 12/-. Will the Government review these rates and compete with the other delivery systems?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE : Sir, in Tamil Nadu, there are 384 Post Offices which take Speed post. They are distributed all over the State. There are certain norms which have to be followed for setting up such centres. For instance, for a National Speed Post Centre, the business must be of about Rs. 45,000 per month in regard to Speed Post. Similarly, they should be connected by flights to the other places so that you can deliver the post on next day of booking, or by the second day. Similarly, there are certain norms for setting up Speed Post centres and Extension Counters. Sir, as the business grows, naturally, we would want to increase the number of Speed Post centres.

Secondly, on the question of rates, the difficulty is that the Government is bound, for instance, to pay salaries to a particular scale. A private courier service may just pick up anybody, pay anything to him, and charge very little. But the hon. Member is completely right that we must compete with them. As the volume of business grows, we will certainly try our best to reduce the rates.

PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Sir, my second supplementary is this. Will the Government evolve a new scheme to reduce the rates and make them equivalent to those being charged by private courier services? The other thing is...

MR. CHAIRMAN : No. I will not allow the third supplementary.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE : Sir, as I mentioned, the rates differ. But if you look at some other private couriers, they charge very high rates, and then give very big discounts, up to 70 per cent, for bulk handling. In Government also, discount schemes are there and, as the volume grows, we will try to increase those discounts also.

श्री राजनाथ सिंह : माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा क्योंकि स्पीड पोस्ट की सर्विस कई प्राइवेट कंपनियों की सर्विसेज़ से ज्यादा कास्टली है और माननीय मंत्री जी ने भी इस चीज़ को स्वीकार किया और हम यह भी महसूस करते हैं कि स्पीड पोस्ट की सर्विसेज़ जितनी क्विक होनी चाहिएं, वे उतनी क्विक नहीं हैं, इसलिए स्पीड पोस्ट सर्विसेस को और ज्यादा क्विक व इफेक्टिव बनाने के लिए सरकार की तरफ से और क्या-क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं? साथ ही मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह भी जानना चाहूंगा कि उत्तर प्रदेश और उत्तरांचल-इन दो राज्यों में क्या कुछ लोकेशंस का सिलेक्शन विभाग के द्वारा किया गया है जहां कि स्पीड पोस्ट की सर्विसेस प्रोवाइड की जा सकें?

श्री अरुण शौरी : सर, इंडिया में 2300 प्राइवेट कूरियर सर्विसेस ओपरेट कर रही हैं। उनमें कई अच्छी हैं और कई बिल्कुल रिलाएबल नहीं हैं। अब अगर चीज खो जाए तो उसके बाद कोई लीगल रेमेडी नहीं है, लेकिन गवर्नमेंट स्पीड पोस्ट में कई लीगल रेमेडीज हैं। उसमें कम्प्लेंट हैंडलिंग प्रोसीजर भी है। सर, स्पीड पोस्ट, पोस्ट ऑफिस के अपने फंक्सनिंग पर यानी डिपार्टमेंट के फंक्सनिंग पर और दूसरे ट्रांसपोर्ट के नेटवर्क के फंक्सनिंग पर निर्भर होती है। अगर दूसरी जगह के लिए फ्लाइट है तब स्पीड पोस्ट हो सकती है, लेकिन जहां फास्ट सर्विस रिलाएबल नहीं है तो देरी हो जाती है। हमारी उसमें पूरी कोशिश होती है और उसमें कोई दिक्कत नहीं है।

सर, यह क्वेश्चन तमिलनाडु के बारे में था, लेकिन उत्तरांचल और उत्तर प्रदेश की लोकेशंस के बारे में माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा है। वहां भी स्पीड पोस्ट के सेंटर्स उसी नॉर्म्स से लोकेट हुए हैं, मगर मैं इनफॉर्मेशन लेकर मेंबर साहब को जरूर भिजवा दूंगा।

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU : Sir, there are no rules and regulations for prohibiting the mushroom growth of courier services in India. Because of that, a lot of competition is prevailing between the post offices and courier services,. Is the Government going to bring in any law or frame any rules for prohibiting the illegal and mushroom growth of courier services which are coming up?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE : Sir, it is an important suggestion on which the Government will certainly contemplate. But, if I may just mention one thing that very often growth is aided by the fact that immediately upon the birth of a particular activity, regulations are not framed. Take for example, the cable industry in India or, the Internet education in India through 'almost teaching shops' in bazaars; it has been enabled because everybody did not jump in with regulations. But, now that there are so many courier services. I will certainly examine the Member's important suggestion.